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AIR PRIORITY

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

FROM : AmEmbassy LISBON

DATE: January 22, 1968

SUBJECT : JOINT WEEKA No. 3
(Jan 12-18, 1968)

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POLITICAL

1. Opposition Leader Arrest Protested

A group of Portuguese lawyers organized by the Portuguese Bar Association has protested the arrest and continued imprisonment of opposition leader Mário SOARES. Soares was arrested last December 12, allegedly for revealing details of the sex scandal story (WEEKA 51) to a visiting newsman. According to a communiqué delivered by representatives of the Bar Association to news correspondents and embassies in Lisbon, more than a hundred lawyers from all over the country cabled their complaint to Justice Minister Mário de Almeida COSTA on January 12. The cable calls for a public explanation of the arrest and an immediate trial for Soares, putting an end to his arbitrary imprisonment. It also complains about the limitation of family visits to Soares - to one^{per}/week, according to the communiqué when the law provides for at least a one-hour visit per day by members of the prisoner's immediate family. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

COMMENT: Nothing about this protest has appeared in the Portuguese press. Soares is well-known, however, to correspondents, the diplomatic corps, and to professional people in Portugal. He is also known in Western European Social Democratic circles as^a/leader of the democratic opposition in Portugal. According to a Sunday Telegraph report, his arrest has also been protested by a number of these parties. Soares' arrest was widely known at the time it occurred and continues to be a current topic of conversation in Lisbon. Several editorials in semi-official right-wing newspapers have defended the need to take action against internal enemies of Portugal ("liars" and the apathetic) and a speech by a Government stalwart was along the same lines in the National Assembly. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

2. Wife of Portuguese Pretender Dies

D. Maria Francisca de Orléans e Bragança, the Duchess of Bragança, and wife of the Pretender to the Portuguese throne, D. Duarte Nuno, died of a heart attack January 15. She is survived by her husband and three sons. Her funeral on January 16 was attended by the full panoply of GOP officials (including Dr. Salazar), Portuguese aristocracy, and quite a number of representatives of European royal families. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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3. Left-Wing Students in Oporto Attempt to Organize Anti-Viet Nam protest

On January 17 six students attempted to inspire the Oporto University study body to gather to make a protest on US policy in Viet Nam at the hour when Ambassador Bennett had planned to make a call on the Rector. Some 50 to 100 students were present, mostly onlookers. As a precaution, the Rector requested Ambassador Bennett to postpone their meeting until later that afternoon. According to American press agency sources, police were called to clear the University area. The Portuguese media did not cover the incident. (UNCLASSIFIED)

COMMENT: This group of left-oriented students represents a very small minority at the University. There have been no demonstrations in Portugal on the subject of Viet Nam. In fact, while there are some who are critical of US policy, especially among students and intellectuals, there is general sympathy in official and private circles toward our participation in the Viet Nam struggle. This attitude has been reflected in the media, as well as in talks with top Government officials. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

4. Visit of CODEL Davis

A Congressional delegation from the House Committee on Science and Astronautics headed by Congressman John W. DAVIS (Ga.) visited Lisbon during the period January 14-16. The itinerary included a visit to the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering during which the Director personally presented a briefing and conducted a tour of the laboratory facilities. The group showed a keen interest in all phases of operation of the laboratory and an admiration for its high standards. (UNCLASSIFIED)

DEFENSE

5. Deslandes Views Guinea, Prepares for Presidential Visit

General Venancia Augusto DESLANDES, Portuguese Air Force, Assistant Secretary of National Defense and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, was visiting Portuguese Guinea this week on "routine official business." (UNCLASSIFIED)

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COMMENT: Politically ambitious Deslandes is fulfilling two basic interrelated tasks during this visit: a) to insure that detailed administrative, substantive and security arrangements are being formulated for President Américo THOMAZ' forthcoming tour of that African province, and b) to examine personally the military and political situation and the mounting insurgency threat. A question likely to be resolved will be the possible replacement this spring or summer of the Governor General, General Arnaldo SCHULZ, who maintains tight reins on the province and who has strongly appealed for increased support from the central Government.

Unusually tight security precautions are being arranged to protect President Thomaz during his February 3-21 visit to Guinea and Cape Verde and details of the trip are being closely held. In light of recent serious increases in guerrilla strength and inroads in Guinea, the visit is expected to demonstrate Portugal's determination to hold all its African provinces. There have been recent reliable reports that Portugal is reviewing its stance on Guinea and shifting its security, strategy and tactics. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. Congress Debates Proposed Military Service Law

In December 1966 a new military service bill, to supersede the 1937 law, was presented to the Corporate Chamber for discussion and revision. In April 1967, the Corporate Chamber presented its suggested changes to the National Assembly for approval. At the opening of the National Assembly in January 1968, one of the first subjects on the agenda was the proposed Military Service Law, which is currently being discussed. The 74 articles of the draft law are contained in four Titles: I - General Principles; II - Military Recruiting (obligatory and voluntary); III - Service in the Armed Forces; and IV - Complementary Provisions. In scope, it defines military service and who is subject to conscription; proposes to raise the duration of active duty from two to three years; revises the active reserve, inactive reserve and territorial reserve; establishes a separate recruiting service under the Department of National Defense; creates a women's volunteer service to release more men for combat; authorizes promotion by distinction for officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted men; and revises the eligibility to leave the country of pre-and post-draft age individuals. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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COMMENT: This draft law is the first major revision of the existing basic law enacted in 1937. It also consolidates the various decrees and directives issued over the past 30 years to meet changing conditions, particularly those since the beginning of insurgency in Africa in 1961. Normally, it might be expected that a bill reviewed by the Corporate Chamber and submitted to the National Assembly would receive a rubber stamp of approval, but members of the National Assembly have shown an unusually active interest and have suggested changes in such provisions as the duration of military service, women in the service, and the postponement of service for university students. Certain proposals have come under close scrutiny and have been critically debated. The draft is expected to pass with some modifications. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

PSYCHOLOGICAL

7. Portuguese Press Condemns Soviet Trial

The press has given full coverage, including several editorials, on the trial of the four young Soviet writers accused of subversion. Coverage has emphasized the lack of public access to the trial, the secrecy about details of the charges, and the severe sentences. In one strong editorial January 12, the Church-supported conservative daily, A Voz, blasted "Soviet justice," the lack of freedom of speech, and lamented the "uncomfortable profession" of writers in the Soviet Union. (UNCLASSIFIED)

COMMENT: The anomaly in the position of the controlled press with respect to "Soviet justice" has not been lost on some Portuguese, especially with the example of the arrest and detention of opposition leader Mario Soares so close at hand (Item 1). (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

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